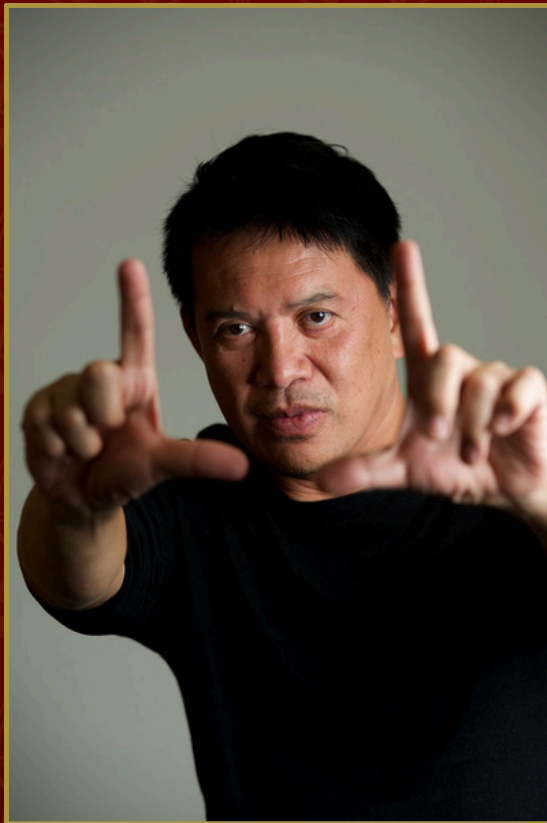


# Brillante Mendoza: A Pioneer of the Filipino New Wave

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**Filmmaker Brillante Mendoza is a Pioneer of the Filipino New Wave**

Source: Filipino-Japanese Journal and Wikipedia

The Filipino New Wave has played a significant role in shaping the current cinema of the Philippines. Beginning in the early twenty-first century, the New Wave has been spearheaded by several notable Filipino directors and actors. One such pioneer of the Filipino New Wave is award-winning filmmaker Brillante Mendoza. Mendoza was born and brought up in the city of San Fernando, Philippines. Also listed as Dante Mendoza on some projects, he studied fine arts at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila and had a brief career in advertising before shifting to cinema.



**Brillante Mendoza has won several International Awards**

Source: Asia-Europe Foundation

He has been active in the film industry since 1985, working as a production designer for several films and television series. Mendoza made his directorial debut in 2005 with *Masahista* (English title: *The Masseur*), a psychological drama about a young man working in a massage parlor. This film won the Golden Leopard Award at the Locarno International Film Festival, the Interfaith Award at Brisbane Filmfest, and the Audience Award at the Torino Film Festival. It also won five awards from the Young Critics Circle, including Best Film, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography, and Best Actor.



Brillante Mendoza's Award-Winning Films *Masahista*, *Kaleldo*, *Manoro*, and *Tirador*

Source: IMDb and SERP Media

Mendoza continued to direct several notable films like *Kaleldo* (2006), *Manoro* (2006), *Foster Child* (2007), and *Tirador* (2007). *Kaleldo* (English title: *Summer Heat*) won the NETPAC Award at the Jeonju International Film Festival, and *Manoro* (English title: *The Teacher*) won Best Director at the Cinemanila International Film Festival. *Tirador* (English title: *Slingshot*) won the Caligari Film Award at the Berlin International Film Festival, Best Picture and Best Direction at the Gawad Urian Awards, and a special jury award at the Marrakech International Film Festival.

The film also won Best Asian Feature Film, Best Director, and the NETPAC Award at the Singapore International Film Festival. *Foster Child* also received several honors: the NETPAC Award at the Brisbane International Film Festival, the SIGNIS Award at the Las Palmas Film Festival, and Best Film at the Durban International Film Festival.



***Serbis* and *Kinatay* made records at the Cannes Film Festival**

Source: IMDb

Mendoza's 2008 film *Serbis* (English title: *Service*) is another record-breaking work: it was the first Filipino film to compete in the main category at the Cannes Film Festival since 1984, and the third overall. The film won Best Picture and Best Direction at the Gawad Urian Awards, the Golden Kinnaree Award at the Bangkok International Film Festival, and the jury award for Best Director at the Pacific Meridian International Film Festival. Mendoza's next film was *Kinatay* (English title: *Butchered*), a 2009 thriller that made history as the first Filipino film to win the Best Director award at Cannes. It also won multiple prizes at the Golden Screen Awards, Gawad Urian Awards, and Sitges.



**Brillante Mendoza is the First Filipino Filmmaker to win Best Director at Cannes**

Source: TransgenderFeed

Mendoza's next film, *Lola* (also titled *Grandmother*) (2009), was a French-Filipino collaboration about two elderly women whose grandsons are the victim and suspect in a crime respectively. This film competed at the Venice Film Festival, making Mendoza the first Filipino filmmaker to be nominated for the topmost prize at all of the big three film festivals: Cannes, Berlin, and Venice. *Lola* received the Don Quixote Award and Ecumenical Jury Award at the Fribourg International Film Festival, the Grand Jury Prize in the World Competition section at the Miami Film Festival, Best Film at the Fajr Film Festival, and Best Feature Film at the Dubai International Film Festival. *Serbis*, *Kinatay*, and *Lola* were all listed in the top ten best films of the decade at the Gawad Urian Awards, cementing Mendoza's position as one of the most profoundly influential Filipino filmmakers at the time.



**Lola, Thy Womb, and Taklub are a few of Mendoza's Notable Award-Winning Films**

Source: IMDb

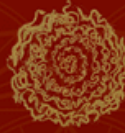
Mendoza's next films were *Captive* (2012), *Sinapupunan* (2012), *Sapi* (2013), and *Taklub* (2015). *Sinapupunan* (English title: *Thy Womb*) was screened at the Venice, Toronto, and Busan International Film Festivals. It won the La Navicella Award for Best Director and a special mention at the Venice Film Festival, Best Direction at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards, a special mention at the Granada Film Festival, and 7 awards at the Metro Manila Film Festival. *Taklub* (English title: *Trap*) won the Ecumenical Jury Prize at Cannes and Best Picture at the Gawad Urian Awards.



Mendoza has directed accoladed films like *Ma' Rosa*, *Mindanao*, and *Gensan Punch*

Source: IMDb and Astig Machismis

A few notable titles on Mendoza's extensive list of award-winning films are *Ma' Rosa* (2016), *Mindanao* (2019), *Gensan Punch* (2021), *Resbak* (2022), and *Apag* (2022). *Ma' Rosa* competed at Cannes, where its leading actress, Jaclyn Jose, won the award for Best Actress. The film also won Best Director at the Gijón International Film Festival. *Mindanao* received several prizes from the Cairo International Film Festival, the Metro Manila Film Festival, and the FAP Awards. *Gensan Punch*, a sports biography about a boxer with a prosthetic leg, premiered at the Busan International Film Festival, where it won the Kim Jiseok Award.



Brillante Mendoza's twin films: *Bansa* and *Moro*  
Source: Busan International Film Festival and IMDb

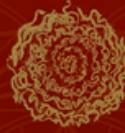
Recently, Mendoza set out to make a four-hour feature titled *Bangsamoro*, which depicted the perspectives of two opposing groups during the 2015 Mamasapano clash. He later decided to split it into two films: *Bansa* from the viewpoint of Special Action Force members, and *Moro* from the eyes of a family affected by the clash, particularly two brothers fighting over money matters. *Moro* was released in 2023 and *Bansa* in 2024, and both have been screened at the Busan International Film Festival.



**Mendoza has also directed the television series *Amo***

Source: Asian Movie Pulse

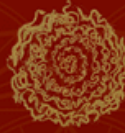
Mendoza also directed the television series *Amo* (English title: *Boss*). This thirteen-episode series was invited to be screened at Cannes in 2017, making it one of very few television series to receive this invitation. It was initially set to be released on TV5 in 2017 but was pushed back due to scheduling issues. It was later released on Netflix in 2018, which earned it the moniker of the first Netflix original series from the Philippines.



**Brillante Mendoza is an inspiration for a whole generation of Filipinos**

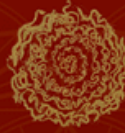
Source: Variety

This brilliant filmmaker's upcoming project is *Chameleon*, a feature focusing on a transgender Filipina who gets involved with Japanese gangsters in 1990s Sapporo. Mendoza continues to contribute significantly to the cinema industry and often headlines workshops, sessions, and discussions at prestigious international platforms, like a Masterclass at IFFI 2023. He was also bestowed with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Asian Film Festival in 2022. Brillante Mendoza thus continues to remain a pioneering filmmaker and an inspiration for aspiring film industry professionals from across the world.



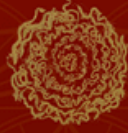
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